



INTERCOM



SOCIAL INVESTMENT NEWS

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*Mission – To help residents of inner cities improve
the quality of their lives to reflect individual
God-given dignity and personal achievement*

NEW COMMUNITY HELPS PEACE PROCESS

The Irish are coming! Once again NCC hosts a group of community leaders from Belfast.

As a part of its commitment to supporting the Peace Process in Northern Ireland, the US Department of Commerce sponsors the American Management and Business Intern Program (AMBIT). Its primary purpose is to help businesses in Northern Ireland and the Border Counties of Ireland to establish business relationships and to develop linkages between community economic development organizations in Northern Ireland and community development corporations in the U.S.

A pilot program took place in March '99 when NCC hosted 17 participants for two weeks. The program was highly successful and is being used as a benchmark for working with other CDC's in the U.S. for the next two years. The participants from the '99 visit were debriefed by AMBIT who shared their learning experiences with NCC—

- NCC has a clear focus on sustaining community projects rather than reliance on government funds
- Community development with support from corporate bodies and local community determination can succeed
- We must view economic development as an integral part of sustainable community development
- Strategies in the area of fundraising/partnerships
- Many skills and knowledge learned from NCC are directly transferable
- NCC is a model of what can be achieved
- A completely different perspective of community economic development from a grass roots level

- Our [Northern Ireland] problems are not unique and are soluble

When asked specifically if the program met their expectations, the Irish participants answered –

- More so – both in the range and depth of programmes and projects provided
- Session on performance management was excellent as well as Msgr. Linder's talk on strategic and economic planning
- Inspirational, informative, demanding, excellent publications
- Surpassed expectations in NCC's openness and willingness to discuss any issue no matter how problematic

According to participants, the most valuable part of the program was—

- In-depth discussion with senior staff especially Human Resource and Finance
- Meeting/talking with locals for their insights on NCC
- Performance Management session
- Seeing the vision; being envisioned

The three Northern Irelanders visiting NCC, June 12-19 are Geraldine McAteer, CEO, Upper Springfield Development Trust; Sammy Douglas, Chair, Greater East Belfast Partnership; Colin Stutt, Partner, Colin Stutt Consulting. The purpose of their visit is to begin to explore options and opportunities for enhancing the AMBIT placement experience in the year 2000 and subsequently.

VISITORS FROM KENYA

The Dean of the Catholic University of East Africa in Nairobi, Kenya and Msgr. Linder met at a conference on international development. They exchanged professional backgrounds. This ultimately led to NCC's visitors from Kenya.

Two social work professors from the University visited NCC for the month of June 2000. They were housed in one of our senior buildings. Both professors, Agnes Nyokahi Kamaw and Samuel Wakanyua were interested in education, modular housing factory, and economic development and training. Their school is interested in learning more about community development activities for adoption into their social work curriculum.

All of this is prompted by the desire to improve the quality of life of so many of their countrymen. Families face problems that include financial, psychological, HIV/AIDS, child abuse, violence, poor housing, poor hygienic conditions, varied diseases, etc. University students are expected to learn methods of intervention to deal with problems. For example, training for empowerment (income generation ideas, human rights, community leadership, etc); preventive health measures; and gender equality would become integral parts of the curriculum in the social work program

NCC's commitment to working on community development issues on a global level is mission related— "to improve the quality of life"

IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF LIFE

Hispanic Development Corporation (HDC)

- New Community's HDC is a mini-United Nations. In its English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, the HDC works with students from Peru, Colombia, Ecuador, Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Guyana and India. The teacher is Ms. Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy – from Brooklyn!

The class is so popular that the students, with the help of the teacher, dug into their own meager funds to continue the program through the summer. Normally there are no classes or funding for the summer months.

- Despite the language barrier and necessary work authorizations, the HDC often finds job placement for their clients. Ismael Rodriguez is among these happy clients. He is from Puerto Rico, in his late 50's with a controlled heart condition. The only thing that depressed Ismael was being out of work. HDC got him into Workforce Development where he took basic life skills and food handling classes. Ismael then got a part time job in NCC Extended Care Facility. However, he wanted to work full time. With the help of a staffing agent from Hobart West in Bloomfield, NJ, Ismael was hired full time in a box-making factory. Delighted with and faithful to his work, Mr. Rodriguez is now happily training for a job as supervisor in the factory.

Family Service Bureau

Aurora, a 23-year-old Hispanic woman gave up her job and her home to nurse her dying mother. When her mother died some months later, Aurora became seriously depressed. Basic health and hygiene habits were neglected. She became suicidal.

The Family Service Bureau's therapist assured her that she was one of God's blessings and of value to the world. Together they explored Aurora's personal supports as well as community supports (welfare, food stamps, Medicaid). Subsequent sessions included discussions on maximizing her support systems, self confidence, dealing with grief issues, and appropriate presentation for job interviews.

Presently, Aurora has a decent paying job. She is working toward a home of her own and stabilizing her life.

LINDA STUDIVANT

Since 1983 Linda Studivant has been a loyal, conscientious, and highly regarded employee of NCC. Presently, she is Office Manager for NCC's Environmental Services Department.

Linda was born in Virginia but raised and educated in Newark. After graduating from West Side High School, Ms. Studivant enrolled in Essex Community College where she received an AA in Accounting. Subsequently, Linda took computer courses in Union County College. During those early days in school, she worked for an advertising agency.

When Linda moved to NCC all those skills and experiences were put to good use. She continues to up-grade her skills with successful management courses, Micro Soft Excel, and NCC-offered workshops in Career Tracks and How to Deal with Difficult Employees.

Given all this background and her continual personal and professional self-improvement classes, Linda has become an icon – she represents the best in her field in NCC. Her penchant for helping people was noticed and thereafter Linda was appointed Contact Person for NCC Gateway-to-Work interns. She counsels and encourages them in good work habits as well as basic life-skills. She has been dubbed the "Office Mother".

Apart from NCC Linda lives in Linden, NJ with her daughter Nakya (Nikki) who is 21 years old and finishing her degree in Criminal Justice. Nikki wants a career in Law Enforcement.

Linda enjoys reading, cooking, and decorating (she rearranges her home decor at least twice a year). NCC appreciates and profits from the quiet efficiency of Ms. Studivant

SOCIAL INVESTMENT

Many thanks to all those communities who continue to invest in NCC. Your helping us makes it possible for us to help others.

NCC continues to build affordable housing – possible only because of our modular housing plant. To those who need help along the road to self-sufficiency, we offer programs which will enhance the journey – life skills, GED prep, computer skills, et al.

Thank you again.

For information on Social Investment, Please contact
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